

JFK Latin Policy

By Dan Kurzman

Staff Reporter

THE VISIT HERE last week of Costa Rican President Francisco Orlich appeared to reflect a gradual return by the United States to a Latin-American policy based primarily on ideology instead of pragmatism.

Fittingly—and symbolically—Orlich, the leader of a genuine democracy, was the first Latin-American chief of state to receive an official invitation to the White House since President Johnson took office.

In a joint communique summing up their talks, the two men "noted especially the intimate relationship which exists between the practice of effective representative democracy and the achievement of social and economic progress."

Of all President Johnson's foreign and domestic policies, probably his hemispheric approach has caused most concern among New Frontiersmen. And this concern has been shared by many Latin Americans.

For in their view, the idealistic aura surrounding President Kennedy's Latin policy had begun to fade as the result of the Johnson Administration's stress on an approach constantly and coldly described as pragmatic.

THE SUPPORTERS of this approach have favored a policy of quiet step-by-step economic advancement under the Alliance for Progress, with less immediate attention devoted to the elusive democratic goals of the program.

A State Department spokesman hinted at their view of Alliance priorities when he said: "United States devotion to the principles of democracy is a historical fact. United States policy toward unconstitutional governments will, as in the past, be guided by the national interest and the circumstances peculiar to each situation."

This statement, critics have maintained, could serve to justify any Latin-

Johnson Edges Away Policy in Return to

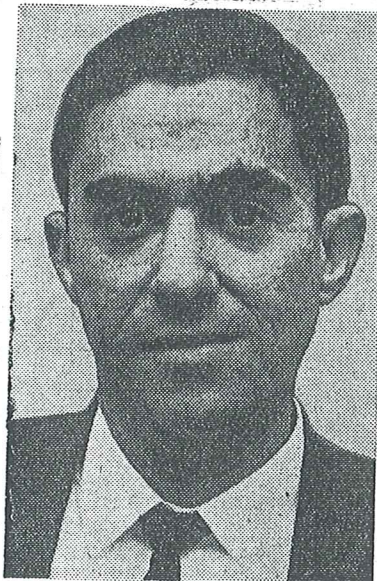
American policy from Theodore Roosevelt's Big Stick diplomacy to Kennedy's partnership program. Its ambiguity has frightened people who remember too well the callous attitude of the United States toward Latin America before Fidel Castro awakened this country to the need to heal the social, economic and political sores that have festered for centuries under the rule of military and oligarchal dictators.

Nor do the New Frontiersmen feel they are any less pragmatic than those who so conspicuously underscore this description of themselves. President Kennedy, they say, chose as his Latin advisers men with missionary zeal who he believed could accomplish more in most cases than diplomatic technicians inhibited by traditional patterns of thought that too often constituted the basis of pragmatic decisions.

The Kennedy advisers, they argue, were not impractical; they simply believed that true pragmatism, taking into account the burning social and ideological factors so neglected by past administrations could only be determined through trial-and-error policy tests.

SEN. HUBERT Humphrey (D-Minn.) has pungently expressed the concern of backers of this approach over recent policy trends in an article published in the current issue of Foreign Affairs:

"We are told that what is needed are fewer statements about the philosophy of the Alliance, the ideology of the doctrines and more hardheaded Alliance, fewer broad-gauged political pragmatic emphasis on economic lending programs. Such an appraisal reflects a misunderstanding of current conditions and trends in Latin America. It reflects a misunderstanding of



RICHARD N. GOODWIN
... writing again



McGEORGE BUNDY
... listened to

Coming Back

From Pragmatic Kennedy Ideology

what President Kennedy had in mind in launching the Alliance for Progress."

Humphrey said President Kennedy realized that for the Alliance to succeed, it "must have a political content and an ideological substance, in addition to a strong program of economic development. It must come to symbolize the hopes and aspirations of both the elite groups and the masses of Latin-American people. It must have a mystique all its own..."

Significantly, Alberto Lleras Camargo, former President of Colombia and one of Latin America's most distinguished statesmen, spoke similarly in a recent address here.

APPARENTLY convinced by the weight of such arguments, President Johnson seems to have soft-pedaled the "pragmatic" approach with words and actions that have deeply impressed those who had been most concerned about his policy.

"He is beginning to understand," said one Latin diplomat, "that Latin Americans want not only sound economic projects but assurances that the United States will continue to encourage the spread of democracy and social justice."

The upgrading of ideology has coincided with the President's increasing reliance on New Frontiersmen for advice on Latin-American policy. He is understood to be listening more carefully to White House adviser McGeorge Bundy, for one.

Another Kennedy adviser, Richard Goodwin, is helping to write presidential speeches concerning Latin America.

The President's decision to depend increasingly on such men has apparently diluted to some degree the influence of Thomas C. Mann, whom Mr. Johnson had selected for the triple

role of his personal adviser on Latin America, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and Administrator of the Alliance for Progress.

Significantly, Goodwin was given the speechwriting role despite Mann's known hostility toward him.

MANN HIMSELF appears to be moving with the tide. As the foremost exponent of a "pragmatic" policy, he delivered two recent speeches emphasizing the importance of democratic political development in the hemisphere.

Nevertheless, diplomats of the Kennedy era are leaving their posts even now. Former Alliance Administrator Theodore Moscoso recently resigned as United States representative to the Inter-American Committee of the Alliance for Progress (CIAP). Deputy Assistant Secretary Benjamin Stephansky and the United States Ambassador to El Salvador, Murat W. Williams, have turned in their resignations. Earlier, Deputy Assistant Secretary Arturo Morales Carrion quit, as did Alliance Information Chief Robert Goldman.

In view of many United States and Latin observers, the Johnson Administration started off on the wrong foot when, after the Panama Canal Zone riots last January, it quibbled over the terms of a procedural agreement for the holding of talks with Panama over the future of the Canal. This stubborn attitude appeared to many Latins as an indication of United States reluctance to consider seriously the rectification of a past "imperialistic" mistake.

And compounding their doubts about the new United States Latin policy was the diminishing stress placed on the ideological aspect of the Alliance for Progress.

These two factors surged into glaring relief in March when President Johnson spoke at the inaugural meeting of CIAP, created to give Latins more say in the Alliance. For he used that



THOMAS C. MANN
... riding the tide

occasion to lay down the law to Panama.

The violence of the reaction among Latins and in the United States press appears to have tested President Johnson's ability to readjust his thinking and policies. Within several days, he came to an amiable agreement with Panama, emphasizing in a speech the importance of the OAS as a peace-making instrument and the Alliance as a vehicle for democratic development.

In May, the President followed up this shift in tactics with a speech to Latin-American ambassadors that President Kennedy himself might have made—not surprisingly in view of Goodwin's hand in its preparation.

In addition, President Johnson is scheduling several quiet dinners with groups of Latin ambassadors to convince them once and for all that the Kennedy spirit is still very much alive.

Thus, the apparent shift in emphasis away from narrow, short-term tactics is yet to be fully tested.

Even so the Johnson Administration erred in embracing the new military-controlled Brazilian government immediately after the overthrow of the demagogic President Joao Goulart. For with United States bargaining power dissipated, the new Brazilian leaders have proved dictatorial.